

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY, ATHERTON AND SAUNDERS

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PERP, EG, IS, US
SUBJECT: SOME THOUGHTS ON CAMP DAVID STRATEGY

1. THE BIG PROBLEM AT CAMP DAVID WILL BE TO GET BEGIN
TO AGREE TO CERTAIN PHRASES IN A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
WHICH WILL BE LIKE CASTOR OIL FOR HIM. DAYAN AND MANY
OTHERS ARE SKEPTICAL THAT HE WILL BRING HIMSELF TO
SWALLOW THE MEDICINE, SINCE HE WOULD HAVE TO WALK AWAY
FROM A LIFETIME CONVICTION ABOUT ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO RULE
OVER THE WEST BANK. BUT THERE IS A CHANCE HE WILL RISE
TO THE HISTORIC MOMENT, WHICH HE KNOWS MAY BE HIS LAST
AND BEST CHANCE TO BECOME THE PRIME MINISTER WHO BROUGHT
PEACE TO ISRAEL.

2. TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF BRINGING BEGIN AROUND WILL REQUIRE
FAR MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER VAGUE INDICATION THAT WITH
"SATISFACTORY" LANGUAGE ABOUT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IN
HAND, SADAT WOULD THEN GO TO HUSSEIN TO SEEK HIS PARTI-
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CIPATION, AND IF REFUSED, MIGHT THEN SHOULDER THE PALES-
TINIAN PROBLEM HIMSELF. BEGIN WILBNEED MUCH MORE THAN
THAT TO SHOW FOR ABANDONING HIS IDEOLOGICAL POSITION,
ESPECIALLY WITH HIS ASSOCIATES IN HERUT.

3. PUT ANOTHER WAY, THE GOI WILL BE ASKING WHAT ISRAEL
WILL GET FROM SADAT FOR ACQUIESCING PUBLICLY ON THE

PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL. (EXPLICITLY PROMISING EVENTUAL ARAB SOVEREIGNTY IS, I THINK, OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR BEGIN.) TO GET FROM BEGIN WHAT SADAT NEEDS WILL REQUIRE HIM TO MAKE CONCRETE CERTAIN UNDERSTANDINGS AT WHICH HE HAS ONLY HINTED TO THE ISRAELIS THUS FAR. THE GOAL SHOULD BE A MUTUALLY AGREED, SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK COMING OUT OF THE SUMMIT FOR A FINAL, IF PHASED, SETTLEMENT IN SINAI. LESS FROM SADAT WILL BRING LESS FROM BEGIN. SADAT'S SERIOUSNESS ABOUT PEACE WILL BE JUDGED HERE BY HIS SERIOUSNESS ABOUT A CONCRETE AGREEMENT OVER SINAI, WHATEVER IS SAID ABOUT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

4. NOBODY KNOWS HOW FAR BEGIN IS WILLING TO GO TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH SADAT, PROBABLY NOT EVEN BEGIN HIMSELF. WHAT I AM SURE OF IS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S FINAL FALLBACK WILL NOT EMERGE UNLESS SADAT SHOWS FLEXIBILITY THAT HAS BEEN NOTABLY ABSENT FROM RECENT EGYPTIAN STATEMENTS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE. IN ORDER TO LEAVE HIS PAST BEHIND, BEGIN WILL HAVE TO BE SURE THAT SADAT WILL MAKE A DEAL--NOT JUST TALK ABOUT ONE, BUT EVENTUALLY MAKE ONE. THUS, WE WILL NO DOUBT BE FACED IN THE SEPTEMBER MEETING WITH BEGIN AND SADAT EACH WAITING FOR THE OTHER TO BLINK. THAT OF COURSE IS WHERE OUR OWN IDEAS COME IN. BUT IN MY VIEW, WE MUST TAKE GREAT CARE NOTZZO ODAECE THROUGH OUR OWN INTERVENTION THE STARK CLARITY OF BEGIN'S OWN CHOICE.

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5. HIS FIRST INTEREST WILL BE TO BLAME STALEMATE, IF IT OCCURS, ON SADAT'S INFLEXIBILITY. IN THAT CASE, IT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH FOR US TO ARGUE THAT SADAT WAS PREPARED RPT PREPARED TO BE FLEXIBLE IN PRIVATE RPT PRIVATE. THE ISRAELIS HAVE HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE, AND MOST DO NOT NOW BELIEVE IT. IF CAMP DAVID WERE TO FAIL, THEN IT WOULD BE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL DEBATE HERE AND IN THE U.S. THAT BEGIN BE SEEN AS REJECTING SADAT'S CLEAR, FORTHCOMING AND PUBLIC OFFER, OR SADAT'S ACCEPTANCE OF U.S. COMPROMISE PROPOSALS. IF BEGIN ADHERES TO HIS PREVIOUS POSITION, IF SADAT DOES PRETTY MUCH THE SAME, AND IF THE U.S. PUTS FORWARD IEAS TO BRIDGE THE GAP WHICH NEITHER SIDE ACCEPTS, BEGIN WILL RETURN TO ISRAEL GENERALLY APPLAUDING THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORT AND SPECIFICALLY BLAMING THE FAILURE ON ANWAR SADAT. MOST ISRAELIS WILL BELIEVE HIM.

6. AS FAR AS IS POSSIBLE, WE MUST SEEK IN THE CAMP DAVID TALKS TO AVOID GIVING BEGIN THIS WAY OUT. THE CHOICE FOR BEGIN, AND FOR ISRAEL SHOULD BE AS CLEAR AS WECAN MAKE IT. AND THAT WILL REQUIRE A CAMP DAVID A STILL FLEXIBLE

ANWAR SADAT, READY TO FURTHER MODERATE HIS POSITIONS, AND
RECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH BY THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN ISRAEL.

7. SINCE MOMENTS OF SUCH CLARITY ARE AS RARE IN INTER-
NRWIONAL POLITICS AS ANYWHERE ELSE, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE
TO PULL THIS OFF. BUT WE SHOULD TRY, AND IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE THAT MEANS THE PRESIDENIGSHOULD TALK TO SADAT
ALONG THESE LINES AT THE OUTSET. I RECOGNIZE SUCH A
COURSE WILL SURELY CAUSE SADAT SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH HIS
ARAB BROTHERS. IN COMPENSATION, THE U.S.-EGYPTIAN
RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE REINFORCED FOR THE FORESEEABLE
FUTURE, A NOT INCONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT FOR HIM AS WELL
AS FOR US. BUT IF SADAT HOLDS BACK AT CAMP DAVID, HIS
JERUSALEM INITATIVE WILL BE DEAD AND BURIED AS FAR AS
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ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED, AND THAT INCLUDES THOSE MOST
CRITICAL OF THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT POLICY.
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